

REMARKS

Claims 8, 9-12, 14, 16, 18 and 20-31 are pending in the present application. Claims 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 25 have been amended, and Claims 1-7, 13, 15, 17 and 32 have cancelled, herewith. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants request entry of this amendment after final as placing this case in condition for allowance.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102, Anticipation

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Musk et al. (US Patent 6,148,260). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants have cancelled Claims 1-7 herewith, without prejudice or disclaimer, in order to expeditiously allow this case to pass to issuance.

Therefore, the rejection of Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 has been overcome.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103, Obviousness

A. The Examiner rejected Claims 8-16, 18-21, 23, 25, 27 and 29-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Musk (US Patent 6,148,260) in view of Mills (US Patent 6,466,940). This rejection is respectfully traversed for reasons given below regarding Claim 17.

In addition, Applicants have cancelled Claim 32 herewith, without prejudice or disclaimer, in order to expeditiously allow this case to pass to issuance.

Therefore, the rejection of Claims 8-16, 18-21, 23, 25, 27 and 29-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been overcome.

B. The Examiner rejected Claims 10, 22, 24, 26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Musk (US Patent 6,148,260) in view of Mills (US Patent 6,466,940), and further in view of Nagai (US Patent 6,138,072). This rejection is respectfully traversed as these claims are dependent on allowable subject matter (as further described below regarding Claim 17), and these claims are therefore similarly allowable at least for the same reasons as the allowable claims they depend upon.

Therefore, the rejection of Claims 10, 22, 24, 26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been overcome.

III. Objection to Claims

The Examiner stated that Claim 17 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants graciously acknowledge the allowability of such claim. Claim 17 depended upon Claim 15, and Claim 15 depended upon Claim 13, which itself depending on Claims 8 and 9. Applicants have amended Claims 8 and 9 to each include the features of Claim 17 and any intervening claims (Claims 13 and 15). Thus, it is urged that amended Claims 8 and 9, and dependent claims thereof, are now allowable.

IV. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over the cited references and is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,



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